On September 30, 1822, Joseph M. Hernández began his service in Congress as Florida's first Territorial Delegate, pioneering Hispanic-American representation in the American republic. Like other Hispanic Americans in the federal legislature during the 1800s, Hernández advanced from the periphery of the Union to hold a brief term in an office whose core duties were more diplomatic than legislative, working to turn the former Spanish colony where he was born into a state. *Hispanic Americans in Congress*, 1822–2012, chronicles the story of Hernández and the 90 Hispanics who followed him into Congress. In helping to shape Congress, these *nuevomexicanos*, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Guamanians, among others, enriched U.S. history.



## Hispanic Americans in Congress

United States House of Representativi

## ON THE COVER:

Henry B. González of Texas is the longest-serving Hispanic American in congressional history.

With years of experience as a civil rights proponent in San Antonio and Texas politics,

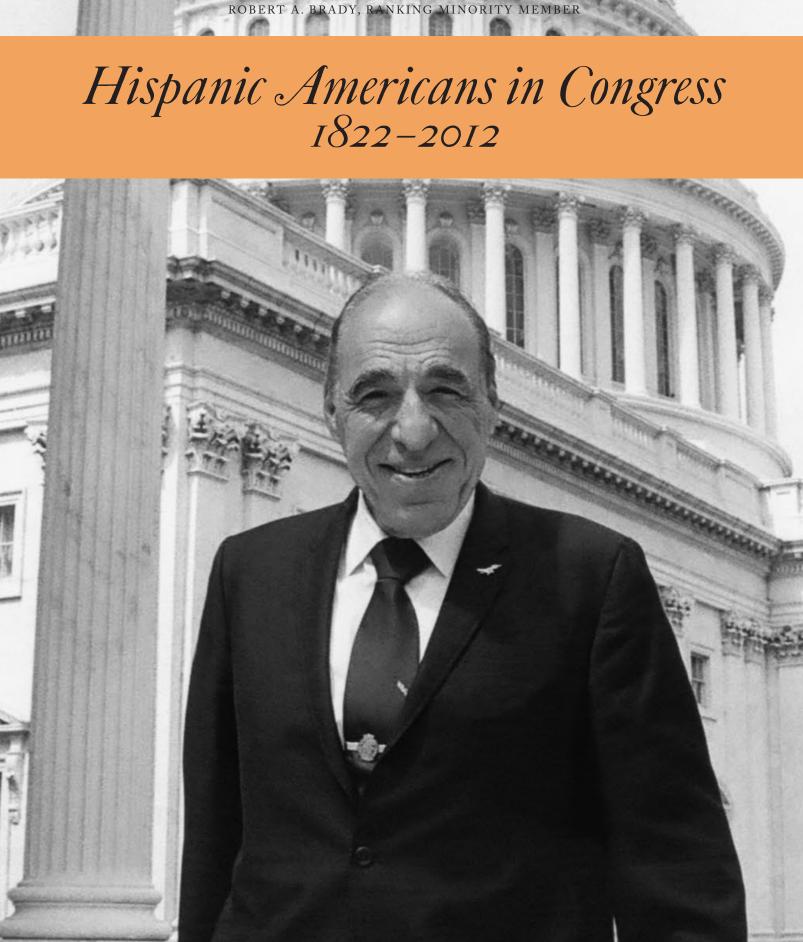
González won a seat in the U.S. House in 1961 in a special election. He went on to serve more than 37 years, helped found the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and became the chairman of the influential House Banking Committee.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office



Office of the Historian and Office of the Clerk united states house of representatives





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DANIEL E. LUNGREN, CHAIRMAN